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RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
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RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 7438
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UNCLAS JAKARTA 013014

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/IET, MED/DASHO/EMR AND MED
DEPT FOR G/AIAG AND OES
DEPT PASS TO USDA/FAS/DLP/HWETZEL AND FAS/ICD/LAIDIG
DEPT ALSO PASS TO USDA/FAS/FAA/DYOUNG AND USDA/APHIS/ANNELLI
DEPT ALSO PASS TO USAID/ANE/CLEMENTS AND GH/CARROLL
DEPT ALSO PASS TO HHS/WSTEIGER/ABHAT/MSTLOUIS AND HHS/NIH
PARIS FOR FAS/AG MINISTER COUNSELOR
BANGKOK FOR APHIS/CARDENAS, RMO, CDC, USAID/RDM/A
CANBERRA FOR APHIS/EDWARDS
ROME FOR FAO
NSC FOR JMELINE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: INDONESIA - NOVEMBER 6 AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI) UPDATE

REF: A) Jakarta 12828 B) Jakarta 12781

¶1. (SBU) Summary. On November 1, Bayu Krisnamurthi, Executive Secretary for the National AI Committee assured the press that

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Indonesian research shows no signs that the H5N1 virus is mutating to a more dangerous form in the country. Food and Agriculture Organization officials concur but caution that there has been limited research into the issue. On October 27, FAO privately expressed skepticism about the Government of Indonesia's announcement of avian influenza free provinces. With no new human cases since Ref B, as of November 3, NAMRU-2 data continue to reflect 72 confirmed cases with 55 fatalities. End Summary.

Indonesian Research Shows No AI Virus Mutation

¶2. (U) On November 1, National Committee on Avian Influenza Management and Pandemic Alert (KOMNAS) Executive Secretary Bayu Krisnamurthi told Dow Jones Newswires that Indonesian research has not seen signs that the H5N1 avian influenza virus is mutating into more pathological, less treatable strains. Research on bird flu in Indonesia has not detected the existence of the Fujian-like strain. "All over Indonesia, for the last three years, we've studied the DNA and strains of the virus," Krisnamurthi noted. "Until the present day, no report has been submitted to the National Committee of a mutated strain." According to KOMNAS research, the virus is still in the original forms first detected in Indonesia.

¶3. (SBU) FAO officials concur that virology to date does not show mutation. However, the FAO cautions that there has been relatively little research into the issue. Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) stopped sending virus samples to overseas reference laboratories from late 2005 through June 2006. In July, the MOA resumed sending samples to an Australian reference

laboratory. Preliminary results from the first 50 viable samples sent indicate that the Indonesian viruses continue to fit amongst previous isolates on the phylogenetic tree. The MOA has not yet released this data to international databases.

FAO's Reaction to GOI October 20 Announcement

¶4. (SBU) Reftel A described Coordinating Minister for Peoples' Welfare Aburizal Bakrie's October 20 announcement that the number of Indonesian provinces affected by the AI virus in poultry has fallen from 30 to 16 over the past six months.

"That finding is based on our observations for the last six months", Bakrie said. "Fourteen provinces have been considered free or did not report any bird flu cases to the National Committee for AI Control and Pandemic Influenza Preparedness", he continued.

¶5. (SBU) We contacted the FAO to get their reaction to this announcement. According to a senior official at FAO, "It is a statement based on 'no report' rather than 'no disease.' We have no evidence to support any of the infected provinces as progressing to disease freedom - with the possible exception of West Irian and Papua - both of which require follow up surveillance." Active surveillance through the Participatory Disease Surveillance program (PDS) is functioning at this time in only seven AI endemic provinces. Until the PDS program or other active surveillance program is operating in the other provinces, it is impossible to confirm whether or not they are AI free.

NAMRU-2 Human AI Case Profile

¶5. (SBU) NAMRU-2 reports no new human cases since Ref A. NAMRU-2 data indicates the following AI-related case profile as of November 3:

-- Number of laboratory confirmed (positive PCR and/or serology) human AI cases: 72, of which 55 have been fatal (case fatality rate of 77 percent).

-- Number of probable AI cases 3 (2 deaths, 67%).

-- Number of cases awaiting analysis at the U.S. CDC: 1.

-- Number of possible untested AI cases under investigation (last 30 days): approximately 15.

Note: NAMRU-2 data corresponds with MOH data but may vary at times with AI case figures presented on the official World Health Organization (WHO) website, which usually lags NAMRU-2 data by one week. The WHO website, last updated on October 31, notes 72 human AI cases in Indonesia with 55 deaths. WHO figures can be accessed at www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza.

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